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SUBJECT Mikhail Gorbachev/U.S.-Soviet Relations

ROBERT MACNEIL: We talk about the new Soviet leader now with two men, an American and a Soviet, who met and worked with Mikhail Gorbachev. The American is John Kristol (?), President of Bankers Trust Bank of Des Moines, Iowa. Mr. Kristol's uncle received former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at his Iowa farm in 1959. Since then, John Kristol has made a number of trips to the Soviet Union. He met Gorbachev first in 1981, and then again in '83, when Gorbachev had responsibility for Soviet agricultural production. He joins us now from Des Moines at the studios of Iowa Public Television.

Former Soviet diplomat Arkady Shevchenko also has met Gorbachev. Shevchenko is the highest Soviet official ever to defect to the West, leaving his United Nations post in 1978. He's the author of the recently published book Breaking with Moscow.

Mr. Kristol in Des Moines, as I say, you've met and talked with Gorbachev for quite long periods. What kind of a man did you make him out to be?

JOHN KRISTOL: He was civil, intelligent, perfectly capable of measuring the faults of the agricultural economy of the Soviet Union, and I think a man who thought that a good economy was good politics.

MACNEIL: Margaret Thatcher also said, besides what we just heard, that he was a man she thought she could deal with. Is he the kind of man you could deal with?

KRISTOL: Yes, I think so. I felt comfortable with him. And while I've only spent four or five hours with him, the

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2

conversations were one-on-one. And I think had I known him longer, I might have liked him.

MACNEIL: Your four or five hours are a lot longer than 98 percent of everybody else in the world has spent with him, I think.

And you say you might have liked him more. What did you mean by that, if you'd spent longer?

KRISTOL: Well, I think you need to be with a person longer than that to think that you could be a friend. And it would be presumptuous of me to think that he thought more of me than that.

MACNEIL: Let's move to Mr. Shevchenko.

How different is Mr. Gorbachev from his predecessors?

[Confusion of voices]

MACNEIL: I'll come back to you in a moment, Mr. Kristol. Let's move to Washington and Mr. Shevchenko.

How different is Gorbachev from his predecessors?

ARKADY SHEVCHENKO: Oh, first of all, he's a younger man. He, as everybody knows, would have another style, better educated. And he -- what I would say, first of all, he has more fresh knowledge of what is going on in the Soviet Union. Because the old leaders, they, for decades, never had a firsthand experience in dealing with the problems. And Gorbachev is relatively fresh. And as First Secretary of the [unintelligible] region, he met with ordinary people, as the First Secretary. He knew directly the problems. And I think that as far as the economy is concerned, as far as the necessity to do something in the Soviet Union, as far as economic problem and social problem in the Soviet Union, we can expect from him something.

But let me caution you that the -- you just mentioned that it's a generational shift in the Soviet leadership. Let's wait. In a sense, it's true. In a sense, only. Because, still, majority of the Politburo, the people to whom Gorbachev have to listen -- and not only listen, but who can make decisions, at the ver top of the Politburo. And moreover, in the [unintelligible] of the Soviet Union, in the regions, also the people are ather old.

So that he's only one who made now the move and become a new leader of the Soviet Union, a leader which perhaps will have a fresh look at the Soviet reality as far as the economy is

concerned, but who definitely will not change anything as far as the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is concerned in the near future.

And moreover, he will need a lot of time to do something, even something very serious in the Soviet Union. He needs to consolidate his power. Still, the majority, as I mentioned, belong to the old generation. And what the sharing of power will be, it remains to be seen what will happen, I mean, with the how arrangements will be.

MACNEIL: Let me go back to Mr. Kristol.

You've met other Soviet leaders and many other Soviet personnel. Is Mr. Gorbachev less ideological, is he more pragmatic, do you think?

KRISTOL: I think that he's a dedicated communist. I also think he is pragmatic. But I think that old people can have young minds, and young people can have old minds. I think he's a young mind in a young body.

MACNEIL: Would you look for any changes?

KRISTOL: I would look for changes domestically. I think that the general public in the Soviet Union wants an economy with a clear direction and a more effective economy. I think he recognizes that desire. And I would expect him to use -- to consolidate his position and to move popularly into a more efficient economy than they have had.

MACNEIL: Mr. Shevchenko, just translating this into the terms of the average American tonight -- and the Soviet Union has been the bugbear of this country all through the cold war. Is this change something that Americans should feel hopeful about, or not hopeful, or have no particular emotion about?

SHEVCHENKO: I don't think that we should expect any drastic changes in the Soviet foreign policy. It would be more or less the same situation.

But in my view, the present Soviet leadership -- not only Gorbachev, but both old and the new, the more younger Soviet leaders -- they need now, above all, I would say, not a confrontation with the West, but a peaceful international environment, to concentrate on domestic problem of the Soviet Union.

And as far as Gorbachev is concerned, I would like also to say that he is a party apparatchik. Don't forget that. You talk about that he's a lawyer, he has education, and he did one thing or another. He's spent all his life as a party

4

apparatchik, devoted party apparatchik, which means that he's very much ideologically oriented.

It doesn't mean that he would not have fresh look at the problems of the Soviet economy. And I'm agreed that most likely he will try to do something, and might do something.

MACNEIL: Domestically.

SHEVCHENKO: Domestically.

MACNEIL: Thank you.

JUDY WOODRUFF: ...We take a look now at the potential Gorbachev impact on U.S.-Soviet relations, particularly the arms control talks that start tomorrow in Geneva, with Arnold Horlick, former CIA National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He is now the Director of the Rand UCLA Center for the Study of Soviet Behavior and Director of Soviet/East European Studies for the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, California. He joins us tonight from Los Angeles.

Mr. Horlick, what effect do you think Mr. Gorbachev's coming in, Mr. Chernenko's death will have on these arms talks, if any?

ARNOLD HORLICK: Well, in the short run, as Secretary Weinberger's bit earlier in the show suggested, it's not likely that the Soviet going-in position at Geneva is going to be affected one way or another, in part because those positions have been worked out over the last few months without the active participation of Chernenko. So taking him out of the picture shouldn't really make any difference.

Secondly, and even more importantly, the logic of the Soviet position at Geneva argues for their doing precisely what it is clear now they will be doing beginning tomorrow, and any Soviet government, I think, would do that -- namely, to try to soften up, to erode, at a minimum to test the firmness of the U.S. position, particularly with respect to strategic defensive weaponry. And if they fail to move that position or to soften it, to seize the high ground, diplomatically and propagandistically, in a struggle for Western public opinion, which I think will be a natural outgrowth of this first round at Geneva.

WOODRUFF: But you're saying they'd be doing that anyway, regardless of who the man at the top is. Right?

HORLICK: Yes. But I do think there may be one difference. I think, for the first time in almost a decade, the Soviet Union will be represented at the highest level in the

world, diplomatically and politically, by a more vigorous, a more dynamic and, from the point of view of Western audiences, also a more attractive Soviet leader. So I suspect that Gorbachev will be in a position to press the Soviet case, particularly with Western public opinion, far more effectively than any Soviet leaders have been able to do for the last half-decade or decade or so.

WOODRUFF: Well now, all those characteristics you just named really add up to a little more than style, don't they? Are you saying that's going to have an impact on policy?

HORLICK: Well, I don't think we should underestimate the importance of style and form. Compared to the aging, moribund almost, in some cases, Soviet leaders that the world had been facing and presented with over the last few years, a vital, living, breathing, healthy, relatively young Soviet leader would be a large improvement, in any case.

But Gorbachev demonstrated in his trip to the United Kingdom a few months ago that, in some respects, he's just what the doctor ordered for the Soviets at this particular time.

Whether this, over time, translates itself also into a change in policy remains to be seen. I think, in domestic affairs, the question of change is, I think, more higher on the agenda and is more likely to attract his energies and attention than foreign affairs.

On the whole, it seems to me, the international relations of the Soviet Union have been less contentious inside the country, including in the leadership, than the question of where to go on domestic affairs.

WOODRUFF: Arkady Shevchenko is still here with us. Let me bring you back into this.

Do you agree much with what Mr. Horlick is saying?

SHEVCHENKO: In some points I agree, in some I disagree.

The one thing which we have to bear in mind, first of all, that Gromyko will remain now the major force in the Soviet leadership who would really dominate the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. And the Gorbachev -- and I agree with what Mr. Horlick said -- that Gorbachev most likely will be more interested in more in domestic affairs of the Soviet Union. But it is Gromyko now who really, with the absence of a strong military leader, after the death of Ustinov and after the dismissal of Ogarkov, actually Gromyko now combine in itself a force which represent the -- as far as shaping the Soviet arms control

6

policy, much more strong than even Gorbachev. Gorbachev will not try even, very much, to disagree with Gromyko.

WOODRUFF: Mr. Horlick, you get what he's saying, that it's going to be a while before Mr. Gorbachev can consolidate his position. Do you agree with that?

HORLICK: Well, no. I think that's true. I was simply saying that by virtue of his greater youth and vitality, he will emerge very quickly as the outstanding authoritative spokesman for the Soviet Union on foreign policy. It may be a foreign policy put together by a collective leadership in which Gromyko's undoubtedly will be the most authoritative voice. But I think the Soviets are in a position to press their case, to prosecute the offensive, which I think they will be waging at Geneva and after Geneva, much more effectively with Gorbachev.

I think the Administration will have a tougher time dealing with the Soviet Union diplomatically now than it has had over the last four years.

WOODRUFF: Why do you say that? Specifically, why?

HORLICK: Well, because the number one man, really since 1979-1980, has only been intermittently available. He has not been available -- Brezhnev, in his declining years; Andropov, for a good part of his tenure; Chernenko, for most of his. They have not been available to deal one-on-one with foreign leaders, especially West European leaders. They have not been able to make the case for the Soviet Union dramatically with Western audiences, the way I believe Gorbachev will do.

WOODRUFF: Well, thank you, Arnold Horlick, for being with us. I know it's a subject we'll be coming back to....